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ABSTRACT

Describing Reading Recovery and Chapter I as two programs that emphasize a one-on-one approach in assisting pupils in learning to read, this paper considers advantages and aspects of these programs. It gives 10 reasons for stressing a single teacher assisting one pupil in learning to read and proposes how these programs may be incorporated into reading instruction of a large group. The paper suggests that smaller class sizes of pupils (10 students or less) would allow teachers to provide more attention in guiding pupils to improve word recognition skills and comprehension. It lists 10 word recognition skills that could be taught sequentially in context. Discussing the need for additional support by the teacher, the paper lists 10 ways to help out in the classroom intending to guide pupils to become achievers in the area of reading instruction. It considers how strategies need to be found to guide all pupils in achieving selected goals in reading. The paper concludes by considering reasons why pupils should become good readers. (Contains 8 references.) (SC)

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Reading and the Individual Pupil.

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READING AND THE INDIVIDUAL PUPIL

Reading Recovery and Chapter One are two programs that emphasize a one on one approach in assisting pupils in learning to read. Primary grade pupils do need quality assistance in learning to read. Those who do not learn to read well or at an acceptable level do need additional help on the primary as well as upper grade levels. Reading Recovery and Chapter One programs are largely for first grade pupils. What about at later grade levels in emphasizing meeting the needs of pupils in reading instruction? Then too, there are high school students who lack reading skills to read at an acceptable level. How might these students be assisted to meet minimal acceptable levels of reading success? The younger the child on the elementary level of schooling, all things being equal, the better the chances are of helping these learners to become proficient readers (Ediger, 1999, 38-40).

Assisting One Pupil At One Time

Reading Recovery and Chapter One Programs do stress a single teacher assisting one pupil in learning to read. This should be an ideal situation for the pupil as well as for the teacher. There are numerous reasons for making this statement.

1. the teacher, for example, has only one child to supervise, not twenty other pupils in the classroom.
2. the teacher may then focus instruction on one pupil.
3. the teacher should have no disruptions due to discipline problems when teaching one pupil in reading.
4. the teacher may then zero in on problems that a learner has in reading and remedy these deficiencies.
5. careful records can be kept pertaining to the one pupil's needs in reading instruction, as compared to the regular classroom where a teacher may have as many as thirty-two pupils in class.
6. much time can be given to preparing for the teaching of one pupil, as compared to teaching many pupils in the regular classroom.
7. the teacher's time is the child's time-- psychologically, this is very sound in meeting pupil needs.
8. esteem and belonging needs of the pupil may readily be met here in a one- one -one approach in the teaching of reading. Thus, the teacher's time is the child's time for reading instruction, and for no one else.
9. a caring, responsible teacher certainly has the opportunities to be successful here in teaching a single pupil.
10. should more pupils have opportunities to experience the one on

one instruction in reading? One on one instruction is very expensive (Ediger, 1999, ERIC # ED422561).

Reading Recovery and Chapter One programs in being one one one in teaching philosophy are expensive and limited to a few pupils. Could personalized plans of reading instruction with a larger group also assist in developing proficient readers for those in need of individual help?

I have supervised student teachers and cooperating teachers for many years in the public schools. One classroom had thirty-two pupils. When walking between the rows in this classroom, I had a difficult time to do so since the classroom was rather small in assisting so many pupils. I always walked between rows in classrooms to see what pupils were achieving in reading activities being pursued. In this classroom of thirty-two pupils, I felt that selected learners were doing a good job of disrupting others. For example, one girl came in a little late into the classroom and threw her reader on her desk so it would bounce off and make a loud noise when hitting the floor. The other pupils in the room laughed and each tried to top the others in joking about the incident. The student teacher and the cooperating teacher had "lost" the pupils in securing any kind of attention for reading instruction. There were several problems here. A major problem was having too many pupils in a small classroom. Not enough assistance in teaching pupils n the class so that smaller numbers could be taught successfully in a classroom. Chances for any kind of success in reading instruction were at a very minimal! One on one reading instruction is quite different from teaching thirty-two pupils in one classroom.

In another situation, in which I supervised student teachers and cooperating teachers, there were twenty-seven pupils in a classroom. These pupils seemingly were very difficult to manage. I joined the two teachers in helping pupils with a work book activity. When I had finished trying to motivate a pupil, he/she would stop working immediately. The same thing happened to the two teachers in the classroom. Any pupil being assisted at a given point would work only then and not sequentially. A pupil would stop working immediately and visit with the neighboring or several children. I asked the cooperating teacher if this was typically for these pupils in teaching reading. "Yes," she said, "and for other curriculum areas the same work habits were exhibited." Thus, there are classrooms of pupils that are difficult to manage, and yet they must be assisted as much as possible to learn to read.

The student teacher showed a filmstrip, in sequence, to these same pupils. As the student teacher was momentarily adjusting the filmstrip for showing, several pupils made animal projections with their hands on the screen. These shadows showed clearly on the screen. Loud pupil laughter followed. One pupil left the room. When doing this, he leaped

over several pupils seated on the floor, next to the chalkboard, dangling his feet in the face of several seated pupils. I felt these pupils were merely learning bad things and not being taught to read nor to achieve in other curriculum areas. Twenty seven pupils in this classroom were too many even if they were well mannered learners. I asked if the pupils in this classroom could not have been grouped better with other classrooms so that misbehavior would not be so concentrated in one room. The cooperating teacher definitely felt too many of the hard to teach pupils had been placed in her room. Just think of the overwhelming difficulties faced by the regular teacher as compared to a one on one situation in teaching reading.

I would I like to mention a third example here. When I started teaching on the elementary school level in a rural Kansas school in the early 1950s, I had twenty pupils in a room teaching grades five through eight. A sixth grade pupil with poor vision and strong lenses on his eye glasses could barely read on the second grade level of reading materials. My idealism was very high as I had just completed a Teaching of Reading Class and felt I could teach anyone to read! This was a strong Mennonite community made up of three different groups of Mennonites. The father of the sixth grader mentioned that he (the father) had always liked school and learning. Friends testified that the father was an avid reader of farm journals and the daily newspaper. The father wanted so badly to have his son, whom I will call "Larry," learn to read well. Why? To go to Harvard or Yale? Not at all. His son was to learn to read so that he cold support himself financially when the parents were no longer living. I started out strong teaching Larry in reading. I felt guilty by giving too much time to Larry, since there were nineteen other pupils in the classroom. Here is how I helped Larry:

1. by reading orally to him as he followed along in his sixth grade reader. His parents did not want him to read from a lower grade level text or from a library book.
2. by recording content from the basal so he could listen to the content as he followed along in his reader.
3. by having others read orally to him as he viewed the content in his basal text. This was done strictly in an atmosphere of respect.

Much time went into these kinds of learning opportunities to help Larry learn to read. His father praised me at the beginning of the year for what I was doing to assist Larry. Three months later, Larry's father said that his son no longer liked school and wished the school year was over with. He was not angry or bitter. The father said Larry had felt this way throughout the elementary school years in wanting school to be out! He also said the feeling in the community was that I, the teacher, was spending too much time with Larry and there were other children in the classroom who needed my assistance (Ediger, 1996, ERIC # ED390067).

There are pupils who need much, much time and help in learning to read. The regular teacher did not have this amount of time when there were other pupils in the classroom who also needed care and help. Title One and Reading Recovery did not exist then. But remember, one on one teaching is very expensive and there are many pupils that need the teacher's assistance for motivation, direction, and encouragement. I must say I dealt in a very conscientious way with Larry and gave him all the time I could possibly give. Somehow, Larry was not able to benefit from my instruction and the rest of the patrons felt that their offspring too needed assistance and guidance. Certainly, Larry would be a pupil today who would be in Reading Recovery or in a Chapter One reading program. I have observed numerous pupils in classrooms today who do not receive the support they need because there is not enough time nor are resources available for teachers to help children with extreme problems in reading. Nearly every parent wants his/her handicapped child to be in the regular classroom, mainstreamed and not in a special education room (See Ediger, 1997, Chapter Two)..

Smaller Class Size of Pupils

Reading teachers in the regular classroom need smaller numbers of pupils so that each can do a professional job of teaching. I believe strongly that if primary grade classrooms had no more than ten pupils per class in reading, learners would have opportunities of achieving at a higher level. With ten per class, the conscientious teacher may provide more attention in guiding pupils to improve in word recognition skills and comprehension. The following word recognition skills might then be taught sequentially in context:

1. phonics in context including single grapheme phoneme relationships, diphthongs, as well as consonant and vowel digraphs.
2. contextual syllabication whereby pupils apply learnings using common prefixes, suffixes, and base words.
3. knowledge and identification of irregularly spelled common words.
4. use of context clues in functional situations.
5. prediction of what will be read by first studying illustrations and topical headings sequentially in the new reading selection. Following reading the selection, each pupil might then check his/her hypothesis. Predicting and checking are valuable skills for pupils to develop and use in the reading curriculum.
6. application of syntactic clues in reading, since there are patterns in the English language when reading content, such as subject-predicate- direct object pattern of sentence. Through much reading, pupils with teacher guidance may learn much about about these sentence patterns. For example, games may be played whereby pupils

brainstorm which words may be substituted for the underlined and yet the sentence maintains its same pattern: The boy rode on the bicycle. Each of the other words in the preceding sentence may also have their respective substitutions and maintain the same sentence pattern.

7. use of semantics in English. Thus, pupils with teacher help need to explore meanings of a sentence so as to clarify what has been read. What may appear to possess clarity might not have the clear and distinct ideas that were originally thought to be true.

8. evaluate personal reading skills through metacognition. Possession of metacognition skills are almost at the heart of being a good readier. Why? Pupils individually learn to monitor their very own reading. A pupil then learns to check the self pertaining to what was and was not comprehended in an ongoing lesson or thematic unit of study. Personal evaluation of what has been and has not been learned adequately in word recognition skills and comprehension is monitored. The learner then diagnoses his/her total inventory of skills in reading and attempts to remedy identified deficiencies.

9. respects the achievement of others in reading and learns to work together harmoniously with others.

10. attempts to meet personal participation and recognition needs. Pupils do need to feel and believe that they can achieve and do grow in the area of reading achievement. Being belittled and ridiculed does not help pupils to attain objectives in reading instruction, but minimizes the learner en toto (See Ediger, 1997, Chapter Five)..

Additional Support Needed by the Teacher

With a maximum ratio of 10 pupils per teacher on the primary grade levels, the classroom teacher would still needs additional quality help, in most cases, to provide for individual differences. Ten pupils per classroom does not tell the complete story. If four pupils, for example, in the class are mainstreamed and behaviorally disordered, then an aide will be necessary to provide assistance in reading instruction. There are numerous retired teachers who did well in teaching reading and are willing to come in for a few hours each day to provide assistance when and where needed. Many schools are using the help of these retired professionals. There are also good paraprofessionals who may be trained through inservice education to provide help in teaching reading under the supervision of the regular teacher. I have supervised student teachers for many years and have found these preservice teachers, in most cases, to be of great help in teaching pupils in reading as well as receiving a quality program of student teaching. With a vision and imagination, school administrators and teachers can obtain the needed assistance in a classroom to guide pupils to become better readers. Unfortunately, most school districts do not wish to spend money on aide

service. Depending upon the present skill of the person who provides assistance to the regular classroom teacher, the following are ways to help out in the classroom with the goal being to guide pupils to become achievers in the area of reading instruction:

1. listen to a small group of pupils read the story orally presently being pursued in thematic unit teaching.
2. assist pupils with word recognition procedures whereby learners need to use definite approaches for unlocking the unknown.
3. listen to pupils retell what has been read.
4. help learners develop an art/construction project directly related to the story content.
5. discuss story subject matter with involved pupils.
6. use recommended techniques to keep pupils on task.
7. give needed guidance to pupils working at learning stations.
8. provide one on one assistance to pupils individually who need help.
9. assist individuals within the classroom who need to return to time on task.
10. read aloud to pupils to encourage interest in literature and reading (See Cain-Casson, 1999)..

What All Pupils Need in Reading

Strategies need to be found to guide all pupils in achieving selected goals in reading. Thus, each pupil needs guidance to acquire adequate background information prior to reading a specific selection. A lack of this information hinders progress in word recognition and comprehension. With the use of concrete (objects, items, realia, and excursions near to the school); semiconcrete (video tapes, films, filmstrips, slides, illustrations, diagrams, charts, picture graphs, and study prints); as well as abstract (tapes, read aloud, discussions, oral reports, lecture and explanations, as well as demonstrations) learning opportunities, the teacher and aides should be able to reach many pupils in assisting each to do as well as possible in reading.

The Zone of Proximal of Development Theory (Vygotsky, 1978) emphasizes that there is a gap between what pupils know and can do versus new objectives that need to be achieved by the learner. This identified gap needs to be provided for by the professional teacher. A variety of concrete, semiconcrete, and abstract experiences need to be provided to modify/eliminate this gap. Learning opportunities chosen must provide for Multiple Intelligences Theory (Gardner, 1993), as possessed by individual pupils. Each pupil is unique and needs to be able to indicate what has been learned through the individual intelligence(s) possessed. The Zone of Proximal Development and the

Theory of Multiple Intelligences are two valuable concepts for reading teachers to use and emphasize in teaching and learning situations.

Obtaining meaning from print is the major goal of reading instruction. There are numerous approaches that may be used here depending upon where the learner is presently in achievement. A Big Book approach may be used. Here, the print is large enough for all to see clearly within a committee or large group instruction. The teacher discusses the related illustrations with learners to provide background information for reading the content. Learners also should relate their own personal experiences to what will be read. The teacher then reads the content aloud to learners as they follow along in the Big Book located in front of the classroom. The teacher should point to the words, phrases, and sentences to provide meaningful learnings for all pupils as the content is read aloud. Unknown words may then become familiar to learners when seeing print and having the related content read aloud. The second time, pupils should read aloud together with the teacher when rereading the subject matter. The material in the Big Book may be reread as often as is necessary so that pupils master the words in print and understand the inherent ideas well . Understanding of ideas read is of utmost importance since reading for meaning needs to be stressed.

A second approach to use when emphasizing meaning in reading is to use the experience chart concept. Here, the teacher may place interesting objects on a learning station. Pupils with teacher guidance need to discuss these objects to develop interest and purpose. Learners may then present the ideas gleaned from the learning station to the teacher who records them on the chalkboard, the word processor, or flip chart. It is important for all in the class or committee to see talk "written down."

Pupils have the background information from viewing and discussing the objects on the learning station and can now relate the abstract print written by the teacher to the concrete objects viewed. After the written subject matter has been completed, the teacher may read aloud that which can be clearly seen by pupils and use the hand to point to words and phrases being expressed orally. Next, pupils with teacher guidance may read orally the related ideas as the latter again points to the words and phrases being read. Rereading may be done as often as is necessary for pupils to master word identification in the experience chart as well as meaning being attached to what is being read.

The Big Book and the experience chart philosophy may be used on any grade level to assist pupils to read meaningfully.

Phonics may be stressed at the appropriate point for either of these two procedures in teaching reading. Phonics learning may become a game for pupils to enjoy. Thus, the teacher may have pupils, after the rereading has been completed, identify words that start with the same letter, which are then recorded. Or, the teacher may ask for words that

end alike or that rhyme. Phonics can be a pleasant experience for pupils. This is not to say that all experiences can be enjoyable for pupils in school. Life itself has its many unpleasant situations and determination needs to be there to go through the maze of difficulties and hopefully succeed. A professional colleague of mine believes that all learning, in degrees, has unpleasantness attached to it. I stress that learning needs to made as pleasant and enjoyable as possible to achieve objectives in reading. The reading teacher needs to take the unpleasantness out of teaching/learning and make instruction as palatable as possible.

In Closing

There are numerous ways to guide pupils to achieve as optimally as possible in reading instruction. Reading teachers need to study each pupil's present achievement level in reading. Based on these findings, a quality reading program for learners, individually, needs to be in the offing. My proposal for ten pupils per teacher on the primary grade levels would be very expensive to implement, but the possibility for each learner to achieve, grow, and develop in reading are tremendous. One on one instruction, in its present form, is also very costly and benefits few pupils only, such as those involved in these programs.

I do not like to tie reading proficiency with economic growth in the US, but the correlation here could be tremendous. There are many other reasons why pupils should become good readers and the following are quite apparent:

1. personal enrichment of life through reading literature during one's entire lifetime. One of the greatest things I value in life is being a capable and proficient reader. I can entertain myself by reading history, education, biology, physics, anthropology, sociology, and mathematics subject matter. My wife likes to read novels, short stories, discoveries in science, and quality literature written by selected writers in different genres.
2. independence in life by being able to skim, scan, and comprehend menus in restaurants as well as reading manuals to make simple repairs in equipment. Think of the embarrassing situations for those unable to read at an acceptable level.
3. not doing menial, low paying work which is unfulfilling and unmotivating. A major reason for doing this kind of work, I believe, is a lack of reading skills in dealing with the abstract and with decision making. Within the framework of a well paying job, the benefits of a rich and rewarding life can be possible. It may not be sinful to be poor, but it is mighty unhandy and places the individual in an unrewarding life.
4. pupils in poverty situations enabled to raise themselves to opportunities of enrichment to secure the good things in life.
5. an adequate self concept, in part, might well come from being

a good reader.

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